



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 10

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OFFICE OF THE
REGIONAL
ADMINISTRATOR

APR 25 2017

The Honorable Derek Kilmer
House of Representatives
1520 Longworth Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Kilmer:

Thank you for your letter dated March 27, 2017, to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Administrator Scott Pruitt requesting assistance in understanding the Agency's role and activity regarding recent and ongoing efforts by the U.S. Navy in the Puget Sound region. Administrator Pruitt has asked me to respond to you on his behalf.

We agree with the statement in your letter that it is in our nation's best interest for the EPA and the Navy to work cooperatively. To that end, we reach out to the appropriate Navy contacts in the normal course of business, and when any environmental issues arise involving the Navy. Also, in turn, the appropriate EPA personnel respond whenever Navy representatives contact us on environmental issues.

When the Navy prepares environmental reviews of proposed projects to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act, they do so according to their own, specific NEPA compliance regulations. The White House Council on Environmental Quality has overseen the development of such regulations for federal agencies to assure consistency with the CEQ NEPA regulations.

The EPA has a statutory role to review and comment on NEPA documents in writing under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act and to make our comment letters available to the public. These environmental impact statements and comment letters are posted on the EPA's web site at <https://www.epa.gov/nepa>. In our comment letters, we offer recommendations to assist other federal agencies in completing adequate environmental reviews and to help ensure that the overall project analyses fully assess the potential environmental impacts and available mitigation measures that will protect human health and the environment while also meeting the purpose and need for the project.

Such was the case for our review of the EA-18G Growler Airfield Operations and Northwest Training and Testing environmental impact statements mentioned in your letter. Our reviews include a look at language in NEPA documents that describes consultation that should take place according to applicable executive orders (e.g., E.O. 13175, *Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments*). Our EIS comment letters offer opportunities for continuing coordination and engagement with project lead agencies, and I am aware that the Navy and the EPA are currently talking to further explain and understand points made in the Growler comment letter.

Often, there is discourse between agencies during the development of NEPA documents, which usually begins when a Federal Register notice announces the opening of the official NEPA scoping period. The EPA takes the opportunity to offer environmental expertise, perspectives, and tools early in the process by writing scoping letters prior to the development of a Draft EIS and, as resources allow, serving as a cooperating agency on a particular project.

When the need for communication on environmental issues has risen in the Puget Sound region, the Navy has been responsive to our requests, and they have also reached out to us. Occasionally, when disagreements arise, we attempt to find common ground that will satisfy environmental requirements and align as closely as possible with the missions of both agencies.

Again, thank you for your letter to Administrator Pruitt. If you would like additional information, please feel free to contact me or your staff may contact Cindy Schuster, Regional Congressional Liaison, at schuster.cindy@epa.gov or 206-553-1815.

Sincerely,



Michelle L. Pirzadeh
Acting Regional Administrator